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New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Egypt	Mr. Kandeel
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Mogae is participating in today's meeting via video-teleconference from Juba.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Wane.

Mr. Wane: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's report on the situation in South Sudan. I will restrict my remarks to updates on the political and security situation received since the circulation of the report on 18 July and will provide some additional considerations.

As far as the deployment of the Regional Protection Force and the status-of-forces agreement violations are concerned, I do not have much more to add to the report that was recently shared. However, allow me to emphasize that, while the Regional Protection Force continues with its process of deployment — we do expect some progress with the arrival of the Rwandan and Ethiopian units in the next two months — the peace process in South Sudan continues to face a number of challenges. As a matter of priority, we must overcome such challenges, if we are to make the most of the opportunity created by the deployment of the RPF in Juba and put the country back on the path towards sustainable peace and stability.

First, I would like to say a few words on the security environment, which remains extremely volatile. Clearly, South Sudan is in need of an effective and credible ceasefire. Since the Government announced the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire in June, there have been worrisome reports of active military operations in Greater Equatoria and Upper Nile states. On 7 July, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) received a credible report that the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has moved towards Mathiang in Upper Nile, after which heavy fighting was reported. The aim of the offensive seems to be to capture opposition-held areas all the way to Pagak. Similarly, clashes have continued between the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition and SPLA troops near Torit in Eastern Equatoria, where UNMISS has recently had to reinforce its presence owing to heavy fighting in the area. Obviously, the nature of those operations ran contrary to the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Government.

Secondly, the Government has publicly expressed its commitment to creating an environment conducive to the national dialogue and that is, of course, to be welcomed and encouraged. At the same time, there have been recently certain decisions that undermine those commitments. On 17 July, two republican decrees were issued, replacing six members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, who are linked to Riek Machar, with members who are aligned with First Vice President Taban Deng Gai, and that certainly further excludes a key constituency of the peace process.

On 18 July, the websites of two important media outlets were blocked after they criticized the Government and, once again, that raises questions about the respect for the freedom of expression. On 10 July, the national security services arrested the Director General of the State-run South Sudan National Broadcasting Corporation. We understand that he has now been released, but clearly all those actions point to the need for the South Sudanese authorities to make more sustained efforts towards creating an environment that is conducive to the conduct of a credible national dialogue.

With respect to the national dialogue, we believe that every effort should be made to ensure that the process is inclusive and transparent, takes place in a free and secure environment, has clear outcomes that complement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, and is supported by a sufficiently broad political consensus from all of the political forces in the country. That is critical in order to ensure that the national dialogue is not displaced or

rejected by the opposition and does not lead to more disputes, fighting, fragmentation and displacement in the country.

I stress that President Mogae, the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, will brief the Council on the implementation status of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan and on the proposed revitalization process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and endorsed by the IGAD Summit. The success of that initiative will definitely depend on the extent to which the Government and the opposition embrace it and commit to its full implementation. That IGAD initiative is an important development that requires active international support, including from the Security Council. I would therefore encourage the Security Council to, once again, express its full support for the IGAD-led process and to urge all South Sudanese stakeholders to embrace that process as a genuine opportunity to restore peace in the country.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the critical importance of the unity of purpose of the region, as well as unity between the region and the rest of the international community, and the need for all concerned members of the international community to send a strong message to the South Sudanese stakeholders that the current status quo is unacceptable and unsustainable. A change in behaviour is long overdue for the sake of the people of South Sudan, and the pursuit of political objectives through violence, which continues, unfortunately, to exact a heavy toll on the people of South Sudan, should not be allowed to continue.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Wane for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mogae.

Mr. Mogae: I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Liu Jieyi, for kindly inviting me to brief the Security Council today.

The Council will recall that in my most recent briefing in March (see S/PV.7906), we were confronted with unprecedented hostilities targeting civilians that resulted in gross human rights abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, a dramatic increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons, and an appalling humanitarian crisis in the country. In that context, I posed the following questions. How do we stop the fighting? How do we stop people from dying of starvation, and how do we ensure the inclusion of all parties — communities and stakeholders — in the peace process so as to allow for peace, relief and inclusivity?

Immediately after that briefing, my team devised and drafted the One Voice initiative, which is a 12-point message from all of us to the South Sudanese leadership, demanding the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of the permanent ceasefire. It remains as pertinent and relevant today as it was when it was written. With the blessing of the Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), His Excellency Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, I engaged in a comprehensive and constant round of consultations with all the critical stakeholders, specifically in line with our One Voice initiative and the pursuit of peace.

I have maintained regular and forthright dialogue with the President of the Republic of South Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, and the First Vice President, General Taban Deng Gai, while constantly reiterating our message of peace, humanitarian relief and political inclusivity. I have met and briefed IGAD Heads of State and Government, the IGAD Council of Ministers, the African Union Commission Chairperson, His Excellency Mr. Faki Mahamat, and the African Union Peace and Security Council. I have also met with His Excellency Mr. Omar Al-Bashir, President of the Sudan; His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, and His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, for the purpose of identifying a way out of the escalating violence and humanitarian crisis.

I appeal to IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and our international partners to adopt One Voice in our common engagement with the leaders of South Sudan. I underscore the need for the leaders of the region to align their messages and actions so as to prevent the situation in South Sudan from deteriorating even further. The leaders of the region expressed their grave concern about the recent escalation of violence, the ongoing violations of the permanent ceasefire, and the worsening humanitarian situation in the country. They emphasized that the conflict in the country requires a political — not a military — solution. They demanded wide inclusivity in the dialogue among the belligerents.

In South Africa, I met with the Vice President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as South Africa's Special Envoy to South Sudan. I also met with Dr. Riek Machar, former First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan. The message I conveyed to Mr. Machar was to renounce violence, declare a unilateral ceasefire and participate in the national dialogue. He declined to do so. However, he demanded a new political process for the region outside South Sudan.

I have also taken the time to meet with some of the key Sudanese stakeholders in opposition and currently out of the country. I met with Ms. Rebecca Nyandeng Garang de Mabior and former detainees, Pa'gan Amum, Kosti Manibe, Mr. Majak D'Agoot and Mr. Cirino Hiteng. I also met with Mr. Lam Akol, Thomas Cirilo, James Oryema and others in order to listen to their grievances. My message to all of them was that those who are still fighting should stop immediately for the sake of the country that they claim to love so much, and that all serious parties should pursue a political path to return to the peace process.

In principle, most welcomed my message. Like Mr. Riek Machar, they demanded a negotiated ceasefire and expressed their willingness to participate in a credible political process outside South Sudan, which might lead to their return with the implementation of the peace agreement. In that regard, they underlined the importance of the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. I hope that by engaging with such determination, we will drive a peaceful, open and transparent dialogue, which is imperative if we are to achieve an inclusive political process and to silence the guns

Accordingly, IGAD held an extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa on 12 June and, following my recommendation, they decided to convene a high-level revitalization forum of the parties to the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, including estranged groups, with a view to discussing concrete measures aimed at restoring a permanent ceasefire, returning to the full implementation of the peace Agreement and developing a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule for democratic elections at the end of the transition.

We welcome that timely decision of the IGAD leadership to seize the opportunity to end the senseless fighting, revitalize the implementation of the peace Agreement and restore hope to the people of South Sudan. The revitalization of the implementation of the peace Agreement is not a renegotiation. The forum will explore options that can restore dynamism and prominence to the peace process. It is our hope that such a revitalization process will be pursued in the spirit of peace, inclusivity and compromise. I hope that all reasonable and positive proposals to restore and reinforce the effective implementation of the peace Agreement will be put forward, discussed and considered at the forum. I encourage all parties and estranged groups to seize this opportunity to put the country first, make compromises and accommodate one another for the sake of peace.

Pursuant to its mandate, the IGAD Council of Ministers met on 2 July and adopted guidelines and an indicative matrix for the convening of the high-level revitalization forum within three months. The revitalization process is intended to ensure the broadest possible consultation with stakeholders and to generate proposals that could make the implementation of the peace Agreement more accommodating, viable and sustainable.

Ultimately, the success of that process will require a willingness on the part of the parties to the peace Agreement, and the estranged groups to compromise and accommodate one another politically. A window of opportunity has opened, and we must all seize it. I believe that, with a resolute and unified approach on the part of IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and the international community — and with cooperation from the South Sudanese leaders — we can recover lost ground and restore hope to the people of South Sudan.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Mogae for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane and President Mogae for their briefings.

When it comes to South Sudan, we have heard lots of promises. We hear promises from South Sudan's leaders that they will finally get serious about pursuing peace. We hear promises that they will allow aid to reach the starving and the sick, as well as promises that

humanitarian workers will not be harassed when they try to do their jobs. And on the basis of those promises, the Security Council waits and waits. We wait for things to change in South Sudan, but nothing is changing in the country. The violence continues. Horrific atrocities are reported so often that they become almost routine. People continue to flee across South Sudan's borders to neighbouring countries. United Nations peacekeepers continue to face obstacles in carrying out their mandate to protect civilians. And humanitarians are blocked from delivering life-saving assistance.

For the people of South Sudan life is worse than ever before. The Council needs to hold the parties on the ground accountable for their broken promises. Consider first the violence — the Council has been calling for a ceasefire in South Sudan since the fighting escalated more than a year ago. In May, the Government declared a unilateral ceasefire but, rather than hold their fire, Government forces have been opening up new battlefronts. Those military operations are forcing thousands of people from their homes. The fighting has forced dozens of humanitarian workers to be evacuated, leaving even more civilians without any help. It is a travesty, truly a travesty.

Commitment to a ceasefire is just one broken promise and the protection of civilians is another. A few weeks ago, United Nations peacekeepers tried to reach an orphanage to help get 250 kids out of harm's way. The United Nations was doing its job, but authorities would not allow the peacekeepers to pass. It is hard to believe, but it is true. Fortunately, the United Nations was eventually able to get there after a delay, but thousands of other civilians cannot be reached. They remain trapped by fighting and are unable to receive any assistance whatsoever.

Humanitarian aid has eased famine in certain parts of the country, but the overall trend is getting worse, not better. Hunger in South Sudan has reached unprecedented levels. More than 6 million people are now severely food insecure — half of South Sudan's population. A total of 1.7 million people are on the brink of starving to death because of the inability of aid agencies to reach them. According to United Nations statistics, June was the worst month for access by aid workers so far this year. Despite promising to stop, the Government is still asking humanitarian groups to pay high fees just to continue operating in the country. The humanitarian community is in a position to help, but the Government and fighters on the ground need to allow them to get to the people in need.

In short, another month has passed with no improvement on the ground. In March, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/4) with a number of specific demands. We called on the parties to stop fighting, commit to a political process and allow for unfettered humanitarian access — but virtually none of those steps happened. The Council must be prepared to hold the parties accountable for their inaction and for the continued suffering of South Sudan's people. The Council must put real pressure on the parties to change their behaviour. That should start with additional targeted sanctions and an arms embargo. Those measures would show that the Council is serious about pushing for an end to the fighting and a return to the negotiating table.

The United States appreciates that the region has appointed a new Special Envoy and will convene a high-level revitalization forum to support a ceasefire in a political process. The forum has broad support from South Sudan's international partners, including endorsement from the African Union. Tragically, the support for a new forum shows that international partners do not have confidence that South Sudan's leaders are taking meaningful steps to live up to their obligations as signatories to the 2015 peace Agreement.

It is high time for action. The revitalization process is the last chance for salvaging the peace Agreement. The United States very much hopes that it will lead to a realistic and meaningful outcome. If South Sudan's leaders do not participate in the high-level forum in good faith and stick to its deadlines, the United States will need to review its position and priorities with regard to support for the peace agreement and its implementing bodies. The bottom line is that we want this regional mediation to succeed, and we need to see South Sudan's leaders truly engaged in it at long last. The people of South Sudan deserve leaders who live up to their promises.

Even facing extreme hardship, the people have not given up hope of something better. There is one town a few hours south of the capital where 70 per cent of the population reportedly fled after fighting broke out. But a small group of children, including many orphans, stayed and found shelter at a local Catholic school. At that school, according to a report from the United

Nations, 14 teachers are volunteering to help the kids. The school's motto is: we cannot surrender.

When those young kids were asked what they wanted, one child put it very simply:

> "I want to beg our leaders, let them bring peace to South Sudan, so that South Sudanese children will enjoy their life like the one of long ago".

Those kids are facing impossible challenges, and they have not given up on a dream of peace for South Sudan. Neither can we. We in the international community can and must act to make the promise of peace a reality.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Wane, and President Mogae for their briefings. Let me take this opportunity to reiterate the full support of the United Kingdom for their work and for the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

I would not normally take the floor before consultations, but the horrifying and entrenched situation in South Sudan compels me to speak out.

Two weeks ago, the people of South Sudan should have been celebrating that young country's Independence Day. They should have been celebrating six years of progress, six years of a country learning to stand on its own two feet. But six years on, South Sudan is not standing. It is barely even crawling, stifled by its leaders, who would rather serve their own ends than help their country. Six years of their rule has left over half the population without enough food — 6 million people dependent on humanitarian assistance just to survive.

Make no mistake: this is a crisis of human creation, a crisis that the leaders of South Sudan have had six years to prevent. But, instead of helping, they have poured fuel on the fire. We need only look at the ongoing fighting across the country between the Government and the opposition forces. In Pagak, for example, the Government offensive has displaced thousands of civilians into Ethiopia. Aid workers have been evacuated. The already desperate humanitarian situation has been made even worse. Yet when the Government is asked about Pagak, we hear different stories from different people. Some say there has been no violence there. Others argue that the offensive was for self-defence. Let us be clear: the violence is happening there, and it is not self-defence. It is a blatant infringement of the ceasefire that President Salva Kiir declared only a few months ago.

Not content with misleading their people and the international community, the Government of South Sudan has systematically clamped down on the media and on access to information. Last Friday, Internet service providers in South Sudan were ordered to block media outlets with which the Government disagrees. The head of State television was reported to have been arrested for failing to broadcast President Kiir's Independence Day speech.

The Government says it is committed to media freedom, but its actions speak otherwise. What the Government of South Sudan says bears no relation to what it does. In June we saw humanitarian access being blocked 100 times, the highest number in a month in 2017 so far. In addition, ceasefire monitors have been blocked on multiple occasions by Government troops from investigating incidents of reported violence. That is all in clear violation of the peace Agreement, and all at the cost of the South Sudanese people.

Until we see the Government's actions match its words, the Council has no choice but to take measures to protect peace and security. For the United Kingdom, that means returning to the issue of an arms embargo on South Sudan once again. We must do all we can to stop the uncontrolled flow of weapons that is driving this violence.

In parallel, we should continue to work with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to support their high-level revitalization forum initiative. The first priority for that must be to bring an end to the fighting. That will require a negotiated ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities agreement among a broad and meaningful range of armed actors. It will require national and local initiatives, and we must be clear that any actors blocking peace will face consequences.

But, in truth, we have said all of this before. In this Chamber back in May (see S/PV.7950), I said that we were not yet fulfilling our responsibilities as the Council to the people of South Sudan. Two months on, that is, I am afraid, still the case. The parties continue to put violence before peace. That cannot continue. We have a unique window of opportunity before the end of the rainy season to make meaningful progress in South Sudan. Should we fail in our efforts, South Sudan will

enter into a fifth year of conflict. For a country that is only six years old, that is simply heart-breaking.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Wane, for his briefing, which is, as usual, very useful, balanced and insightful. We are also very grateful to President Mogae, the very wise man of our region, in whom we take great pride, for his remarks and for his dedicated efforts to carry out difficult responsibilities in challenging circumstances. We in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) remain indebted to him.

The worsening security situation in South Sudan is deeply worrying for us in the region. Despite the declaration by His Excellency President Salva Kiir of a unilateral ceasefire, which we appreciate, fighting has continued unabated across several parts of the country, with devastating consequences for the civilian population. The recent escalation of the conflict in Upper Nile state and the declaration of a state of emergency in four states show the deterioration of the situation.

The cessation of all hostilities and violence in the country is indeed a matter of urgent priority if we are to alleviate the suffering of the South Sudanese people, who have endured so much for far too long. That would create an environment in which it would be possible to address the dire humanitarian situation, including by facilitating humanitarian access. The high number of incidents and obstacles faced by humanitarian agencies, including the killing of humanitarian personnel and the denial of access for the delivery of humanitarian supplies, continue to pose serious challenges and should be of serious concern. We call upon all the parties to take urgent measures to facilitate unhindered access to the affected population.

We also call upon the international community to urgently step up efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to save lives and support the suffering people of South Sudan. There have been reported incidents affecting the ceasefire and transitional security arrangements that have prevented Monitoring Mechanism teams from carrying out their duties by both parties.

As much as we appreciate the effort, it is extremely difficult to talk about joint and inclusive political dialogue while there is ongoing fighting throughout the country. That is why all parties must immediately renounce violence and urgently take joint steps to cease all hostilities.

As IGAD has reiterated, the full implementation of the 2015 peace Agreement remains the only viable way forward to bring an end to the conflict and restore peace and stability in South Sudan. The lack of meaningful progress in the implementation of the Agreement has indeed been a source of great concern, necessitating the reinvigoration of the peace process so as to ensure the full implementation of the Agreement through greater inclusivity, forgiveness and reconciliation.

It is in that context that the IGAD Summit decided to urgently convene a high-level revitilization forum of the parties to the Agreement, including estranged groups, to discuss concrete measures to restore a permanent ceasefire, to fully implement the peace agreement and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule leading towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period.

A clear guideline and implementation matrix for the high-level forum has been approved by the fifty-seventh extraordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers. The IGAD Council of Ministers and Chiefs of Staff will soon meet in Juba as per the approved matrix and guideline. The Council of Ministers will be travelling to Juba next Monday, and it would be proper for the Security Council to strongly support that effort. The Council should lend its unreserved support to such regional efforts and send a strong and unified message to all the parties in South Sudan to encourage them to seriously and constructively engage in the peace process. We reiterate the importance of maintaining the unity of purpose among IGAD, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, including the Security Council, in the search for lasting peace, security and stability in South Sudan.

President Mogae has been urging for some time, as he did a while ago, that the principle of one voice — all of us the speaking with one voice — should be our guide. That might in fact be the silver bullet that we need to make serious progress in South Sudan for peace: one voice, one action. Sometimes the answer might lie in the simple, in the manifestly least complicated.

In that regard, I should add that there is no viable alternative to the efforts being carried out by IGAD in coordination with the AU and the United Nations. We in the IGAD region remain as steadfast as ever in our resolve to cooperate with the African Union and

the United Nations in bringing about lasting peace in South Sudan. That was reflected in the recent decision of the IGAD Summit and the Council of Ministers, which reaffirmed the region's firm resolve to work closely with the AU and the United Nations in its reinvigoration effort. The African Union, at its twenty-ninth ordinary session of the Assembly, also endorsed those regional efforts, including the convening of the high-level revitalization forum of the peace Agreement. We encourage such coordination and collaboration efforts on the part of IGAD, the AU and the United Nations and urge that such efforts continue to be further strengthened. I am reiterating again the one-voice principle.

Finally, no matter what we in the region and the rest of the international community may do, the success of the reinvigoration process, as we work to address the enormous challenge that South Sudan is facing, will depend to a great degree on the willingness of all the parties. We hope that all South Sudanese parties will rise to the challenge and work towards the restoration of peace through genuine dialogue and reconciliation.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to join other speakers in thanking Mr. Wane and Mr. Mogae for their respective briefings.

As was pointed out in this Chamber last month (see S/PV.7982), it has been six years since South Sudan declared its independence, but very few celebrations have been able to take place, given the fact that the country is still submerged in a deep crisis, with 6 million South Sudanese facing food insecurity and millions of South Sudanese who have been displaced from their homes owing to armed conflicts.

I am going to be very brief because some colleagues who spoke before me have analysed many of the points that we were going to mention, in particular, for example, what was said by Ambassador Sison with respect to the litany of commitments that have not been fulfilled over the past few months, and the frustrations over the obstacles that the South Sudanese Government still imposes on the functioning of United Nations forces. Also, as was pointed out recently by Ambassador Rycroft, we are absolutely convinced that this crisis is strictly the result of a conflict of personal ambitions between two of the country's political leaders, who have placed their own ambitions of attaining power above the needs of their citizens. What a contrast with the example of Colombia and its efforts in its peace process. What a contrast between some people who are brave enough to do everything for peace and others who continue just to wage war and seek strictly personal benefits. That is truly very sad.

Fortunately, in the midst of all of this, we must recognize the tireless efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission in trying to relaunch a political process. However, no effort by the Security Council, the African Union or IGAD will be even the least bit successful if the political leaders of South Sudan do not commit to fulfilling their people's needs.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for organizing this important meeting. I also wish to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, and the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, President Festus Mogae, for their commitment and enlightening briefings. I would like to focus on two points.

First of all, our mobilization is more necessary than ever, given the suffering that is affecting more and more civilians. Despite the rainy season, the fighting continues in South Sudan, with tragic consequences for civilians. The recent clashes around Pagak have led to more people fleeing their homes, thereby further increasing the flow of displaced persons and refugees. The humanitarian situation remains catastrophic. Although the state of famine has been lifted in certain areas of the country, the spectre of starvation and malnutrition still hangs over too many civilians. Women and children are always the first victims.

In that context, I would like to commend the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which has adopted a robust posture so as to fulfil its mandate to protect civilians. We call on it to continue working to that end, but the unacceptable obstacles to its efforts and to that of humanitarian workers are still too numerous. France vigorously condemns them.

The primary responsibility to protect civilians rests with the Government of South Sudan. We therefore call on it to do its utmost to ensure smooth cooperation with UNMISS and to facilitate access for humanitarian organizations and workers. That includes allowing access to all areas where civilians are at risk.

Finally, almost a year after its establishment, the Regional Protection Force must also be allowed to deploy fully. We welcome the most recent positive developments in that regard, but there are still many challenges and bottlenecks that must be resolved.

The Council must also assume its responsibilities. We must ensure that a cessation of hostilities is concluded and implemented as soon as possible. We must also continue to seriously consider ways to reduce the level of violence in the country; France has long believed that an arms embargo would contribute to that goal.

Secondly, the encouraging signs on the political front must, with our support, be focused on and materialized.

Certain recent political developments offer grounds for hope that true political progress can take place. We welcome in particular the establishment, during the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Council of Ministers held on 2 July, of modalities and a timeline for the implementation of the high-level revitalization forum for the peace agreement in South Sudan. That decision should make it possible to fuel current efforts to relaunch the political process.

We also welcome the actions taken by various players in support of the political process. We commend the efforts of the IGAD Special Envoy, the High Representative of the African Union, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and, of course, yours, President Mogae, as well as those of Uganda and Kenya, whose initiatives should help move the peace process forward. France supports the efforts of all of these players, and it should be noted that effective coordination among them is a key condition for ensuring the success of their work.

This mobilization must make it possible to achieve progress in the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, which remains the cornerstone of the political process. The national dialogue must be truly inclusive so as to create a positive and lasting dynamic.

Nor must we lose sight of the need to fight impunity or of the imperative of ensuring accountability for those who have committed human rights violations. This means establishing, as soon as possible, a hybrid court, with the African Union playing a leading role therein.

Summer 2015 was one of hope, with the signing of the peace agreement. Summer 2016 was one of disillusion and violence, with the Juba crisis in July. This summer must be one of sustainable progress; we owe it to the people of that country, who have suffered for far too long.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I wish to start by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Wane and President Mogae for their comprehensive briefings to the Council this morning.

The political, security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains deeply concerning. The ongoing conflict continues to have a profound impact on the people of South Sudan, with almost 2 million people having fled the country and half of the remaining population in need of assistance. As has been said before, a political solution is the only way to resolve the conflict and to end the suffering of the people. Efforts to that end must therefore be redoubled and encouraged.

In this regard, we welcome the recent initiatives by South Sudan's neighbours, in particular the decision by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to convene a high-level revitalization forum and the approval by the IGAD Council of Ministers of a detailed timeline to implement this decision. The forum should help move the parties towards a permanent ceasefire and a credible political process. We also welcome the efforts made by Uganda and President Museveni, as well as by the African Union, in supporting the process. The commitment of IGAD to engage all parties, including estranged groups and other stakeholders, is particularly important. Let me take this opportunity to also underscore the need to strengthen the role and participation of women in this process.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned at the fact that, in spite of these regional efforts and the repeated declarations by President Kiir of a unilateral ceasefire, reports of intensive fighting continue. Recent confrontations around Pagak and Torit are particularly worrying and show that the Sudan People's Liberation Army has launched new offensive operations, calling into question the political will to find a peaceful solution. We call on all parties to immediately lay down their arms and to adhere to the ceasefire, as the Council has stressed on numerous occasions. While this is first and foremost a humanitarian imperative, there can never be a meaningful political process unless the fighting is brought to an end, as the representatives of Ethiopia and other countries have emphasized this morning.

In the face of these latest developments, it is essential that the Security Council remain unified and reinforce the intensified regional efforts. We have

called for an end to the violence and impunity; for increased humanitarian access; for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to be able to do its work; and for support for the implementation of the peace agreement. It has to be made clear that we intend to follow through on our decisions.

Our efforts should also continue to be well coordinated with those of the region. We look forward to the visit by the IGAD Council of Ministers to Juba next week. This will be an important opportunity to engage the parties on the need to immediately adhere to a ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian access and engage in a meaningful political process. Today's meeting makes clear that the IGAD delegation has our full support and backing.

The humanitarian situation, particularly in terms of food security, continues to worsen. Meanwhile, humanitarian access is becoming more restricted, with 100 humanitarian-access incidents reported in June, the highest number recorded in one month so far in 2017, as others have mentioned. Further humanitarian financing is needed, and humanitarian access must remain a key priority.

We commend UNMISS for responding swiftly to ensure the protection of civilians in South Sudan. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, women, girls and children have borne the brunt of the crisis. We encourage UNMISS to continue to respond proactively to those who are particularly vulnerable, including to address sexual and gender-based violence. We commend Special Representative Shearer for engaging the Government in operationalizing the proposed "one-stop shop" to ensure that UNMISS can operate effectively, and we call on the Government to swiftly establish this mechanism.

The longer this conflict is allowed to continue, the harder the road to recovery, reconciliation and peace will be. The leadership being shown by regional actors deserves our active support, as a united, proactive and assertive effort towards peace is long overdue.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the delegation of China for having convened this open briefing, as the Security Council must continually follow up the situation in South Sudan. We also express our thanks for the information provided today by Assistant Secretary-General El-Ghassim Wane. We welcome his work and that of his team, work that they are carrying out in the very difficult context that we are seeing today in the youngest country in the world. We also welcome in particular Mr. Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. Bolivia reiterates its support for and acknowledgement of his work.

In January 2011, more than 98 per cent of the citizens of South Sudan chose independence; that became a reality on 9 July that year. Today, unfortunately, six years after the South Sudanese achieved independence, the unity that they showed then has evaporated.

The Republic of South Sudan is tackling an economic, political, security and humanitarian crisis that continues to prevent many of its citizens from seeing the objectives of independence actually take shape. Bolivia's desire is for the brotherly South Sudanese people to enjoy the peace and development that they deserve and that a country with such potential could offer them.

We take note of the conciliatory message delivered by President Salva Kiir on the sixth anniversary of independence. He stated that war was not an option and appealed to those who had not yet done so to respect the ceasefire.

The first step towards achieving peace is the cessation of hostilities. We must continue to work towards that, and the international community must support the efforts that have been made recently in that respect. However, it is the South Sudanese themselves who should lead the process, and the full commitment of all players is vital. Internal divisions and rivalries, both within the Government and in the opposition, must be set aside, as must all differences relating to who governs and who aspires to govern. The well-being of the country's citizens must always be the main objective.

Restoring momentum to the political process is only the second step. Ensuring the implementation of the 2015 Agreement is the way to proceed. Inclusiveness and genuine dialogue are fundamental ingredients. As Special Envoy Haysom — to whose efforts we reiterate our support — mentioned in a previous briefing, there is some agreement between the opposition groups and the Government. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has a very important role to play in that regard. We await the convening of the high-level revitalization forum on the 2015 agreement. In that context, we welcome the appointment of Ambassador

Ismail Wais as IGAD's Special Envoy for South Sudan and assure him of our unconditional support for his work.

Bolivia would like to reiterate its support for regional efforts in the quest for a solution to the situation. As the IGAD communiqué of 2 July states, the African Union, the United Nations and the other IGAD partners must support the efforts to revitalize the Agreement. It is therefore important to highlight President Mogae's efforts to revive the political process. His recommendations will be very important for the forum that IGAD has called for.

We also note that the famine in the country is under control. We greatly appreciate the tremendous efforts of humanitarian workers and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to that end, but there is still much to be done. The latest figures from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicate that 6 million people — 50 per cent of the population — will need food assistance this month. It will be crucial to ensure that there is unhindered, safe access for humanitarian aid and for UNMISS.

With regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, we welcome the progress that the engineering and rapid-deployment companies have made, which we hope they will complete this month. We encourage UNMISS and the Government to work together to achieve that. The help that the Regional Protection Force can give UNMISS is essential if it is to be able to guarantee the protection of civilians. For example, security improvements in rural areas are linked to agricultural development, which is important to increasing economic production, and crop production in particular, so as to fight famine and improve the living conditions of the South Sudanese. Lastly in that regard, we should highlight the significant work being done by UNMISS, which has ramped up its patrols on the ground. We appreciate the steps it is taking in order to improve the effectiveness of its efforts.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I, too, would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane and President Mogae for their briefings today.

The situation on the ground continues to be pretty terrible. Half of the population of South Sudan needs food or other aid. The South Sudanese authorities continue to violate the status of forces agreement, including in cases of the arrest and arbitrary detention of the personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Despite the commitments on allowing unhindered humanitarian access, there has been an increasing number of attacks on humanitarian workers. The human rights situation is also worsening, with 250 children trapped between the clashing parties and an increase in arrests of journalists, to give just two examples. Despite the Government's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire, the fighting rages on. In that context, I would like to commend the Sudan for the one-year deal it has offered to permit the flow of aid to South Sudanese refugees after the opening of the humanitarian corridors, in an affirmation of the constructive spirit shown by Khartoum in this crisis.

We reiterate our firm belief that the only solution to the crisis is a political one, a position that we have taken in previous Council meetings, bilaterally and as co-Chair of the Partners Forum of the 12 June Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It is also clear to all of us that, without the collaboration of the members of IGAD, there can be no peace in South Sudan. Together with the African Union and the United Nations, IGAD is the organization that can and must develop a political track for inclusive dialogue between the parties to the conflict in South Sudan. We therefore greatly appreciate the growing intensity of its diplomatic action in recent weeks.

The communiqué of the IGAD ministerial Summit on 2 July is an important step in that direction. We also agree with the Secretary-General that the deployment of the Regional Protection Force to Juba, which is slowly proceeding, will help UNMISS to concentrate more effectively on other areas of the country. We therefore call on the South Sudanese authorities to facilitate its rapid deployment.

But that will not be a panacea. It is the South Sudanese leaders who must negotiate the peace. They have the responsibility for ending the conflict and to feed and protect their population, or face accountability for failing in that. In that regard, the work of establishing a hybrid court must be speeded up.

In conclusion, Italy will continue to work on two fronts. At the political level, we will make efforts in every possible forum to encourage a solution to the crisis, starting with South Sudan's stakeholders, including civil society and regional stakeholders. At the humanitarian level, we will provide aid and financing programmes aimed at addressing the country's emergencies. We also look forward to hearing from Under-Secretary-General

Lacroix, who is currently visiting the region, and we hope that, at the upcoming IGAD ministerial Summit on 24 July, the indirect communication channel that has been reopened between the South Sudanese leaders can reinvigorate the process.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his substantive briefing. We are also obliged to the Secretary-General for the balanced assessment he has given once again in his monthly report, and grateful to President Mogae for his detailed statement.

We share the view that the situation in South Sudan can be stabilized only through a sustainable ceasefire and the start of an inclusive national reconciliation process. The South Sudan crisis has already had severe humanitarian consequences. The worst impact of its escalation has been in the subregion, where it has resulted in a significant increase in the influx of refugees into neighbouring countries. In that regard, we would like to note the constructive attitude of South Sudan's neighbours, particularly the Sudan, in helping to alleviate the humanitarian situation. We also do not think it fair to blame the ongoing violence exclusively on Juba, which had already announced a ceasefire unilaterally. It is crucial to ensure that the opposition takes similar steps. We continue to believe that the threatened sanctions will not help to solve the crisis, and they might in fact make it worse — a view that coincides with that of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other countries of the region.

We note that advance units of the Regional Protection Force began deploying to South Sudan in May. We assume that IGAD and the United Nations Secretariat will continue to work with the South Sudan authorities on mutually acceptable modalities for that operation. We would like to point out that Juba has maintained its constructive position on the issue of the Regional Protection Force, as the Government's decision on providing plots of land for its bases testifies. We urge South Sudan and its troop-contributing countries to work together to enable the Regional Force to reach operational readiness.

We are hoping for success for the national dialogue initiated in May by President Kiir with the participation of all ethnic groups, political stakeholders and population sectors, with the goal of achieving national reconciliation and an end to the conflict in South Sudan, and we urge everyone to give it their full support. We would like to note the personal efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres in this area, and we welcome the coordinated efforts that regional actors are making to facilitate a settlement in Southern Sudan. Nor should we neglect to mention the initiative launched at IGAD's June Summit for the revitalization of the South Sudan peace Agreement and the regional stakeholders' efforts to implement it.

We trust that the Ugandan-mediated contacts with South Sudanese parties will also bear fruit. At the same time, we would like to caution against excessive optimism. The political process is only just beginning. There is a great deal of laborious work that lies ahead if we want to see a convergence of positions and seek compromises. We hope that the cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development will demonstrate its effectiveness.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Wane and President Mogae for their comprehensive, insightful briefings. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

We are gravely concerned that, despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by the transitional Government in May, the Sudan People's Liberation Army continues to fight.

It is also equally alarming that incidents concerning humanitarian access and violence against the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and humanitarian personnel have sharply escalated, which has led to an increase in internally displaced persons. Such hostile actions undermine efforts made by the transitional Government and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to facilitate the peace process, further deteriorating humanitarian and security conditions.

In that regard we urge that all parties to the conflict immediately cease hostilities, especially in Equatoria and the Greater Upper Nile region. We also urge all parties stop attacks on humanitarian workers, so that access to famine-affected locations is not impacted. We also urge that UNMISS staff members not face arbitrary arrests or detention.

We welcome the recent decision of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to convene a revitalization forum, which will include all parties. It will allow parties to discuss how to effectively implement the peace Agreement and prepare for the forthcoming democratic elections. We hope that the outcome of the forum will lay the necessary foundations to help build stable State institutions. Simultaneously, we need to ensure that the national dialogue launched in May is thoroughly inclusive and transparent. In order to achieve true political progress, we urge the transitional Government to demonstrate political will and engage positively with the United Nations and regional actors.

There is a need for closer cooperation and assistance from the United Nations, the African Union, IGAD, the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, leaders of neighbouring countries and other international partners. Only coordinated and united efforts will bring about the long-awaited peace and stability to South Sudan. It is our strong conviction that the Government should speedily allocate personnel to operate the proposed one-stop-shop, which would the free up the Mission's operations and the movement of UNMISS patrols.

We would like to pay sincere tribute to UNMISS personnel and Special Representative for South Sudan Shearer for working in such a difficult environment on the ground.

To conclude, Kazakhstan fully supports the concerted efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD. We will work with the Council and key actors to find a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan, which should remain high on our priority list.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal is not in the habit of delivering a statement following briefings or consultations. Accordingly, my remarks will be very brief.

We commend and thank Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, as well as His Excellency President Festus Mogae. We thank them for their clarifying briefings. I shall limit my remarks to one question.

Given that we have all reached agreement regarding our own observations of the situation, what is it that we are to do as members of the Security Council? We have all said that there is a need for coordination between the subregion and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, between the region and the African Union, and at United Nations, particularly the Security Council. I raise the question because in a few moments we will meet in informal consultations, when the Security Council can at last take concrete measures.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I join my colleagues in thanking today's briefers for their valuable presentations. I have three brief points to highlight.

First, the security situation is deeply concerning to say the least. Ukraine strongly condemns the armed clashes that took place on Monday in Gogrial state, which involved local communities. A cattle dispute was transformed into a full-scale armed battle, during which a number of people were killed and many more wounded. That serves to underline the fact that the situation in South Sudan remains extremely fragile, even in areas that were previously considered peaceful. We took note of the fact that, in response to the incident, President Kiir declared a three-month state of emergency in some parts of the country. He also ordered the establishment of an investigation committee. It is important to ensure that those involved in the killings are held accountable.

We are no less concerned about the recent reports that Government troops have begun their military advance towards the stronghold of the position in Pagak. Armed clashes between the two sides in neighbourhoods of the city have already resulted in thousands of civilians fleeing their homes.

As to my second point, on the political process, we have been closely following the ongoing consultations in the region on how to advance peace in South Sudan. We welcome the conclusion of the recently held extraordinary session of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Council of Ministers on South Sudan, which adopted guidelines to spearhead the revitalization of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan and the road map towards the high-level revitalization forum.

It is not the first time that we expect the parties to demonstrate, once and for all, real goodwill towards reaching an agreement on the restoration of the permanent ceasefire and to start preparations, with a realistic timeline, for the holding of democratic elections. Unless that process is all-inclusive, it has no chance of succeeding.

My last point is with regard to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We lament that obstructions to the work of UNMISS and humanitarian organizations work are continuing. Those obstructions negatively affect the Mission's ability to effectively implement crucially important tasks mandated by the Security Council. The Mission and humanitarian actors must have unhindered access to the affected areas in order to help those in need, in particular in the areas affected by the recent armed clashes. Ukraine remains convinced that the Security Council should speak with one voice. It has to continue to be engaged with the Government of South Sudan, both collectively and bilaterally, in order to remove impediments UNMISS operations and the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. We have no doubt that such a deployment is in the best interests of the Government if it genuinely seeks peace in the country.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would also like to thank Mr. Wane and His Excellency President Mogae for their comprehensive briefings, which have updated us on the situation in South Sudan.

Japan would like to express its deep concern over the situation on the ground, in particular regarding the Sudan People's Liberation Army's advance towards Pagak. It undercuts the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Kiir and contradicts his claim on Independence Day that war is not an option. We call for restraint from both the Government and the opposition. It is also worrying that residents and aid workers are again evacuating from Upper Nile state due to the advance on Pagak. An effective use of the humanitarian high-level oversight committee mechanism is urged in order to enhance humanitarian access.

Japan is encouraged that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is currently working with the African Union, the United Nations and the international community to revitalize the 2015 Agreement by engaging with previously excluded groups. The Government of South Sudan is also preparing for an upcoming IGAD ministerial meeting for that same purpose. The Council should unite in urging all parties to constructively engage in the process so that, based on those collective efforts, the revitalization forum, slated for September, will yield positive results.

The recently launched national dialogue is equally important. We commend the work of the National Dialogue Steering Committee, especially its efforts to reach out to parties outside of South Sudan, as well as to grass-roots organizations in the country. Dialogue at the national level requires grass-roots trust-building and reconciliation activities at the local level. Japan is working closely with the United Nations Development Programme in connection with local efforts to enhance transparency and credibility so as to ensure genuinely inclusive national dialogue.

The national dialogue also requires an environment conducive to its ends, including through an immediate cessation of hostilities and the release of political prisoners. Japan's Ambassador in Juba has also emphasized those points to President Kiir directly, First Vice President Taban Deng Gai and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Japan renews its call on all parties to stop fighting.

Lastly, with regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, we look forward to an expeditious completion of its deployment, including through the prompt resolution of land-allocation issues and accelerated administrative processes. Further cooperation among troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the Government of South Sudan is important for that purpose.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of China.

China thanks Assistant Secretary-General Wane and Chairperson Mogae for their respective briefings.

Recently, thanks to the joint effort of the South Sudanese Government and the relevant parties, progress has been made in the country's political process. At the same time, however, the overall situation in the country remains complex and serious. It is facing serious challenges in the political, security, economic and humanitarian areas.

A political solution is the only way out of the current situation. To achieve that requires, on the one hand, stepped-up efforts on the part of the Government and the people of South Sudan, and, on the other, increased support from the international community. There has to be synergy on both fronts. A settlement must be based on the actual conditions of the country. It must tackle the root causes of the situation and should aim at broad support for a settlement.

First, priority should be given to speeding up the political process in the country and maintaining its stability. The South Sudanese Government has made commendable efforts to maintain internal peace and stability. President Kiir formally launched the national dialogue in May and announced a unilateral ceasefire, thereby establishing favourable conditions for facilitating the political process.

At present, the South Sudanese Government has reached an agreement with some of the opposition groups, for which China expresses its appreciation. China hopes that the international community will continue to fully support the leading role that the South Sudanese Government has assumed in addressing internal matters; strengthen its communication and coordination with the Government; and, at the same time, continue to enhance its engagement with the parties concerned and urge them to abandon the military option and return to the political track. At the same time, it is important to enhance the inclusiveness of the national dialogue and resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations so as to enhance mutual trust.

Secondly, it is important to continue to support the leading role of regional and subregional organizations in carrying out their good offices. Regional organizations, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have brought to bear their unique advantages and have intensified their good offices. Recently, IGAD held a special summit and a meeting of the Council of Ministers of South Sudan during which they had constructive discussions on how to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and came up with ideas and proposals. China expresses its appreciation in that regard. China welcome's IGAD's holding of the high-level revitalization forum and hopes that regional organizations will continue to strengthen exchanges, communication and coordination with the Government, send out a unified message to the outside world, and work in synergy towards a political solution.

Thirdly, it is necessary to enhance humanitarian and economic assistance to South Sudan. As a result of a protracted conflict, South Sudan's social and economic foundations have been seriously damaged, and economic development has been beset by difficulties as a result of a long and protracted drought and other extreme weather conditions. The country is now facing the serious risk of famine. The international community should enhance the targeted and coordinated nature of its assistance, with priorities given to and focus on areas involving critical infrastructure, such as agriculture, irrigation and roads, so as to improve the conditions for economic and social development as soon as possible and raise the living standard of the local people to promote a national reconstruction so as to gradually resolve the root causes of the current conflict.

China commends the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in discharging its mandate and for the important role that it has played in maintaining peace and stability in South Sudan. We hope that the Secretariat and UNMISS will strengthen their communication with the South Sudanese Government, properly resolve issues related to their cooperation and enhance the functionality and effectiveness of UNMISS so as to better respond to complex situations.

The Chinese Government has all along supported the peace process in South Sudan and provided assistance to the country, within its ability, through bilateral and multilateral channels. Several days ago, through the World Food Programme, China provided food assistance totalling $5 million to South Sudan, and through bilateral channels, China has provided food assistance totalling 8,750 tons and a total of ¥5 million worth of anti-malaria medicine so as to help the South Sudanese people respond to famine and that disease.

Recently, China dispatched more than 1,000 peacekeepers to South Sudan. Three hundred and thirty-one rank and file members of the Chinese engineering battalion and of the medical teams deployed in South Sudan were awarded the United Nations Peace Medal of Honour. China will continue to play a constructive role to help the country achieve durable peace and stability and sustainable development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mogae to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Mogae: As I did not understand the question asked by the representative of Senegal, perhaps he could repeat it.

Mr. Seck (Senegal): Members of the Security Council asked what, in your opinion, the Council should do now when everyone agrees that the region and the subregion, with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the

United Nations, which is the universal body, must align their approach to help South Sudan get out of this very difficult crisis. We asked our question with ourselves in mind because we will be conducting consultations in a few moments. As we are about to embark upon consultations, the President thought that you might have some thoughts pertaining to my question.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. Mogae, can you clarify this point?

Mr. Mogae: If it is a question of asking what my wishes are, I wish that the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) would speak with one voice. That is what I want them to do. At present, their approaches are not quite the same, and the South Sudanese will continue to take advantage of differences in approach. Also, I think that the authorities — the African Union, IGAD and the United Nations — could maybe warn the South Sudanese much more firmly that these entities mean what they say.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): I am pleased and honoured to address the Security Council under your presidency, Sir. Allow me to begin by congratulating you and your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Council during the month of July and for your sound management of the Council this month. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in your endeavours for the few days left of your presidency.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, and former President Festus Mogae, the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, who is joining us from Juba.

I would like to reiterate the Government of National Unity's commitment to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. We are happy to report that there have been positive developments with regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, with some of the units and contingent's equipment already in Juba. Moreover, we are happy to inform the Council that on 18 July, just two days ago, the Government of National Unity made welcome progress on the proposed one-stop shop by appointing the national staff. The one-stop shop, as Council members well know, is intended to resolve impediments to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) operations, including facilitating equipment and supply clearances. The Government of National Unity has the political will and desire to continue to work closely with UNMISS and the humanitarian actors to address any pending issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the humanitarian organizations for their large-scale and sustained mobilizations since the onset of the crisis, and for their continued commitment to working with the South Sudanese people under the challenges they face. Despite the lifting of the famine alert on South Sudan, signifying an improvement in food security, the humanitarian situation continues to be dire. We continue to urge the friends of South Sudan and the international community to honour the pledges they made so as to meet the humanitarian gap being faced by various humanitarian organizations.

As reported in last month's briefing (see S/PV.7982), the national dialogue has started its work and is progressing well. It is imperative to report here that the co-Chairs of the Steering Committee have begun their efforts to reach out to the other stakeholders who are in and out of South Sudan in an effort to bring them on board to the national dialogue initiative. One of the co-Chairs of the Steering Committee led the delegation to South African to meet with the Mr. Riek Machar, who, unfortunately, declined to give him and his delegation an audience. That is indeed unfortunate as the national dialogue is intended to be a forum for the people of South Sudan to air their views and grievances, including Mr. Riek Machar's.

The Government therefore urges Mr. Riek Machar and other armed opposition groups to reconsider their positions regarding the national dialogue. The national dialogue can be inclusive only with their participation, but its success does not depend on their participation. So it would be prudent if they put aside their personal bitterness and embraced initiatives that seek to bring about a lasting peaceful solution to the people of South Sudan.

In conclusion, the Transitional Government of National Unity continues to be grateful for the role being played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, the United Nations and the international community at large in trying to find lasting peace, stability and prosperity for

South Sudan. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan agrees with the international community that this can be achieved only through a political process that is embraced and accepted by the South Sudanese people. It is in that spirit that the Transitional Government of National Unity accepted the recent IGAD Summit resolution to hold a high-level discussion with the aim of revitalizing the implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan. As a result of the mentioned resolution, we are happy to note that the IGAD Ministers of Foreign Affairs will meet in Juba in the next few days and we would like to wish them a successful deliberation.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.